6 Indians in the United Kingdom

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CLOSE-UP 6

1. Facts and figures

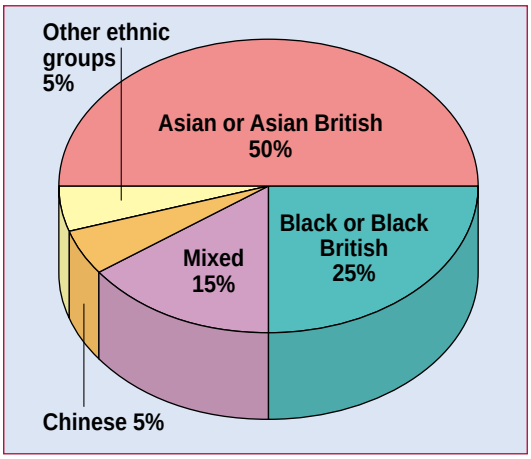
India used to be a British colony (independence: 1947). Out of Britain's 60 million inhabitants, about 1.5 million people of Indian origin now live in the United Kingdom. Their cultural values contribute significantly towards making it the dynamic society that it is today. Over the past few decades, the UK has become an ethnically diverse society. One of the largest ethnic minority groups is Indian. Like other minority groups, Indians came to the heart of the British Empire in vast numbers after World War II. Immigration from the South Asian subcontinent leveled out (*se stabiliser*) in the 1990s. These ethnic groups live in urban and industrial areas like London, Leeds or Birmingham. Indians have become one of the most integrated minority groups in the UK.

1. Read the text, then close your books and try to remember as many elements as you can.
2. Observe the figures (*chiffres*) and the pie chart (*camembert*). How large is the Indian community compared to other minority groups? How can you explain this?

Population of the UK by ethnic groups

White:	**92.1 %**
Total minority ethnic pop.:	**7.9 %**
Asian or Asian British:	4 % Indian: 1.8 %
Black or Black British:	2 %
Mixed:	1.1 %
Chinese:	0.4 %
Other ethnic groups:	0.4 %

UK non-White population by ethnic groups



2. Indian traditions

1. Describe pictures **a**, **b** and **c** (p. 22-23): people, places, activities.
2. What image of the Indian community is conveyed in these pictures?

Useful words: greet *saluer* – t**u**rban ['tɜːbən] – do the sh**o**pping – shop w**i**ndow – trad**i**tional – c**u**lture – c**u**ltural – c**e**lebrate – c**u**stom ['kʌstəm] *coutume* – stick to one's roots *rester fidèle à ses racines* – be upr**oo**ted *être déraciné* – id**e**ntity – **i**ntegrate **i**nto

a. Prince Charles on a visit to a Sihk Temple in Southhall, West London.

b. A sari shop in the Asian area of Brick Lane in London, famed for its curry houses and market.

c. Diwali is a major Hindu religious festival, honouring Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Held over the New Year according to the Vikrama calendar, it is marked by feasting, gifts, and the lighting of lamps.

3. A taste of India

Is India colonizing her colonizer? Not at gunpoint, but by the force of ideas, by the seduction of her spices, her tantalizing web of music, dance and Bollywood cinema. Looking at the calendar of events in London, it did look like a genuine Indian summer, with not only film, art and music events but also major promotions in department stores, malls, bookstores and museums, as well as on television, most of it revolving around Bollywood, India's distinctive film industry. […]

Even as England lost the World Cup, the film making big news and big bucks* was Gurinder Chadha's "Bend it Like Beckham," the story of a young British Asian girl's passion for soccer. The film has made millions of dollars, been on the top ten lists and has attracted audiences irrespective of age, gender or race. […]

The British seem to have an insatiable fascination with all things Indian. While books by Indian authors are flying off the shelves, *tandoori* (brick oven) fare is reputed to have overtaken fish and chips as the national favourite. There are today over 8,000 Indian restaurants in the U.K.

Music created by British Asians is vitalizing the club scene with its funky sounds and Indian dance and theater is enriching the arts. "Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham" became the first Hindi film to reach number three on national cinema charts.

Lavina MELWANI, in *Hinduism Today* (January-February-March 2003)

* *qui a rapporté beaucoup d'argent* (1 buck = 1 dollar)

1. Read the text and find the English equivalents of (in the right order): *sous la menace d'un revolver – fascinant – variété – authentique – se vendre comme des petits pains – four – nourriture*.
2. Describe the picture briefly and give your impressions. What part of the text does it illustrate?
3. What have Indian culture and tradition brought Britons?
4. How can you explain this craze (*engouement*) for Indian culture in the United Kingdom?

4. Talking point

Do Indian culture and traditions appeal to you? Why or why not?

5. Booming Indian businesses

1. Describe the photo with the young man. Why is he smiling? What does this picture symbolize?
2. Read the text and make a list of all the sectors in which Indian businesses are thriving (*prospérer*).
3. What are the economic and social consequences of the development of Indian businesses?

Greater London Authority statistics reveal that there are over 10,000 Indian-owned businesses in London, around three per cent of all businesses. In 2002, Indian-owned businesses in London employed almost 49,000 people and had a turnover[1] of over £8 billion.

According to the Mayor, the Indian presence within London's economy is a huge asset[2] and has the potential to forge and sustain links[3] between London and India – which is set to become the third most powerful economy in the world by 2050. […]

Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, said: "London's Indian community makes up six per cent of the total population. The community's success is apparent through their strong socio-economic position, business success, role in the creative industry sector, levels of educational achievement[4] and contribution to health services and culture. London is the hub[5] of the Indian community and culture in Europe, and home to the largest Hindu and Sikh temples outside India. In February 2004, 18 Indian companies were listed on the London Stock Exchange[6]. We should work together to forge and sustain this unique link – London is India's gateway[7] to Europe."

Indian culture has made a huge impact on music, theatre and film in London. Selfridges has featured Bollywood as major theme in their flagship London store[8] and Bombay Dreams, which is now being staged in New York, was one of the most popular theatre productions in London. […]

Links between London and India also generate London jobs. According to GLA Economics, London's exports to India are an estimated £200 million to £300 million of services and £50 million to £100 million of goods providing in the region of 5,000 to 10,000 London jobs.

However, the Mayor will argue that progress still needs to be made on Indian political representation in London. Currently, there is an under-representation of Indians at various levels in public life. London only has one Indian MP[9] and there are no Indians as Council leaders or any Indian members of the London Assembly. […] The Mayor wants London's governance to reflect its diverse population.

Greater London Authority (www.london.gov.uk), September 1, 2004

1. *chiffre d'affaires* – 2. *atout* – 3. *nourrir les liens* – 4. [ə'tʃi:vmənt] *réussite* – 5. *plaque tournante* – 6. *la Bourse* – 7. *porte d'accès* – 8. *magasin vedette* – 9. M**e**mber of P**a**rliament ['pɑ:ləmənt]

The Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden, London, is the largest Hindu temple outside India.